

Over the past decade, what we have learned is that the AWP is a fictitious number that must be changed. Rather than an accurate barometer of the price at which physicians purchase the drugs used in their practice, the AWP benchmark is more like a car's "sticker price," which is usually much higher than the actual acquisition cost. Under competitive pressure, manufacturers and wholesalers will routinely discount drug prices to physicians, lower their cost, while maintaining a higher AWP. In a competitive spiral, these discounts grow, increasing the net profits on the drugs, while the Medicare program continues to pay the higher AWP.

Unfortunately, due to the 20 percent copay that all beneficiaries pay for part B services, Medicare beneficiaries presently pay \$200 million more than they should in inflated co-pays. What's more, the Medicare program itself pays over \$1 billion more than we should.

The new system, based on competitive bidding and choice, pays appropriately for drugs and reimburses physicians appropriately for services. Under this new model, we provide physicians a choice—either continue to do business as they have or enter a new program that provides drugs to physicians for administration on a replacement basis. These reforms are fair, sound and must be enacted.

Earlier this year, Congress set aside \$400 billion for the development of a prescription drug benefit in Medicare. This is a significant and meaningful commitment by Congress for our Nation's seniors. Some may quibble about the size of the benefit. However, I am convinced that we can pass legislation so that every senior has access to the latest prescription drug products and has catastrophic coverage for very serious, very costly medical conditions. We owe it to our seniors to pass and have the President sign into law, a prescription drug benefit this year.

HONORING PASTOR G.L. JOHNSON

HON. GEORGE RADANOVICH

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, July 8, 2003

Mr. RADANOVICH. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Pastor G.L. Johnson for his 40 years of ministry with Peoples Church in Fresno, California. He will be honored at a special dinner for civic and community leaders to be held Saturday, June 28th.

Pastor Johnson came to Fresno as the Associate Director of the Latin American Orphanage. In 1963, he accepted the position of Senior Pastor at Peoples Church, having had over ten years of pastoral experience. Under his leadership, People's Church has grown to become the largest Protestant Church in Central California, with an average Sunday attendance of 4,500. The Johnson Scholarship Fund has also been established in his honor to assist young people with the cost of education prior to entering full-time ministry.

Pastor Johnson has poured his life into Fresno for the sake of the Kingdom of God. He derives great joy in knowing that God has used his ministry to bring thousands to know Jesus Christ. The mission of Peoples Church seems to coincide with that of Pastor Johnson's personal mission, to "Reach . . . Win . . . Train . . . Send." It has been said that

Pastor Johnson was to Peoples Church ". . . what Babe Ruth was to baseball, George Washington to the United States, and the Apostle Paul to the Gentiles."

Pastor Johnson's respect and admiration go beyond the walls of Peoples Church. In 1997, he was listed by the Fresno Bee as one of 75 people who made a positive contribution to life in the Central Valley. He and the late Pastor Bufe Karraker gathered church and local leaders to tackle the issue of crime in Fresno, forming the NoName Fellowship, and reached beyond the church family to touch lives of the citizens in the city. Pastor Johnson has been the recipient of numerous awards such as the Distinguished Service Award of the City of Fresno, "Mayor of Fresno, For the Day" in 1973 and 1987, and listed in "Who's Who" for Fresno and American Religion. He also sits on several boards, including the Sequoia Council of Boy Scouts of America, Fresno Leadership Foundation, Police Activities League, and Northern California National Association of Evangelicals.

Pastor Johnson has spoken at numerous Christian Universities and conferences across the country. In addition to his ministry in the United States, he has ministered to large crowds in Seoul, Korea; to Russian leaders following the fall of Communism; and to Christians in Romania and China. Pastor Johnson is also the author of several booklets and articles including How to Conduct a Stewardship Campaign in the Local Church.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Pastor G.L. Johnson for his years of ministry and outstanding personal contributions to the community of Fresno. I invite my colleagues to join me in wishing Pastor Johnson many years of continued success.

HONORING DR. MICHAEL
REYNOLDS

HON. BARBARA LEE

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, July 8, 2003

Ms. LEE. Mr. Speaker, I rise to recognize the contributions of Dr. Michael Reynolds, PhD, to the advancement of science education, to the creation and development of the Chabot Space and Science Center in Oakland, California, and to the science education of young students in Oakland, the East Bay and Northern California.

Dr. Reynolds was hired as Executive Director of the historic Chabot Observatory and Science Center in 1991, after being named Florida Science Educator of the Year and being a finalist in the NASA Teacher in Space Program.

Dr. Reynolds led the team, which conceived, financed and built the new Chabot Space and Science Center, with energy, enthusiasm and skill. The center is a jewel of Northern California.

Dr. Reynolds has built programs with the United States Air Force, NASA, the National Science Foundation (NSF) and the Department of Education to further Science Education and the public understanding of the frontiers of space science.

Under Dr. Reynolds leadership, the new Chabot Space and Science Center has become internationally renowned for its science education programs.

Dr. Reynolds has secured, with NSF funding, a major new traveling exhibit from the People's Republic of China, consisting of artifacts and instruments used in ancient Chinese astronomy, that will tour the United States under the title of "Dragon Skies".

On behalf of the children, parents, educators of Oakland, of California and of the nation, I want to gratefully acknowledge the contributions of Dr. Michael Reynolds, PhD, to the advancement of science education and understanding, and for the building of the new Chabot Space and Science Center, which will serve as a place of inspiration and learning for generations to come.

On behalf of my constituents and myself I wish to recognize the accomplishments of an educator, scientist, astronomer, dreamer, and an eternal optimist whose watchword is "Keep Looking Up."

MEDICARE PRESCRIPTION DRUG
AND MODERNIZATION ACT OF 2003

SPEECH OF

HON. EARL BLUMENAUER

OF OREGON

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, June 26, 2003

Mr. BLUMENAUER. Mr. Speaker, I was disappointed that the Rules Committee did not make in order an opportunity for an alternative proposal from my colleagues Ellen Tauscher and Cal Dooley, in the form of H.R. 1568. Looking carefully at the arguments from both sides of the aisle on the proposals before us today, I am inclined to think that they are both right. There are egregious problems in the proposal by the Republicans. It is going to have serious dislocative effects; it doesn't adequately meet the needs of low-income people; it could actually deteriorate prescription drug coverage for others; and, it extends services to many who do not need it.

The Democratic alternative is well-intentioned and more generous, but there are questions about whether this will be affordable over time. We may be biting off more than we can sustain as Medicare goes into a time of severe strain with regard to cost and the capacity to meet the needs of an exploding retirement population.

I continue to be troubled that low income senior citizens without drug coverage pay the highest prices in the world for their medicines. This is intolerable. There is real potential to harness the vast purchasing power of the United States to negotiate better prices, the same way private employers, local governments and hospitals do. The power of the free market and negotiation should not be denied to the sector that would benefit from it the most. There is no reason that the nation's Medicare recipients should pay a higher price for the same drugs that recipients who are part of our veterans program receive. We can craft a program that is not unduly coercive, and does not lead to a disruption of the drug industry. The pharmaceutical industry needs to be more accommodating of this approach, or I feel that they will inevitably end up with far more draconian solutions. They cannot continue to mine gold from low income senior citizens.

The alternative that I would rather have had on the floor today would expend the same